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ABSTRACT

Project CREST (Clinical Regional Support Teams) is an innovative, LEAA-funded action project, using paid and volunteer counselor education students to work as referral agents with juvenile delinquents in several north Florida communities. The program is distinctive in that its assessment, counseling, and consulting services do not replace but rather augment regular Division of Youth Services probation treatment, resulting in ongoing "dual treatment" for CREST clients. This report provides abstracts of presentations on: (1) the need for the CREST project and the challenge the field of juvenile corrections now offers the counseling profession; (2) how the CREST teams of graduate students operate; (3) how the project helps train its staff to be effective with a difficult client population; (4) how team members attempt to function as community change agents as well as personal counselors; (5) what research studies show about the project's effectiveness, together with a discussion of the problems and pitfalls encountered in such research; and (6) funding resources now available to the counseling profession for projects with a delinquent population, plus necessary steps in obtaining these funds. This report includes the names and addresses of program presenters who may be contacted for further information. (Author)

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PROJECT CREST: A UNIVERSITY RESPONDS TO JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

A Convention Program Summary

Robert Lee, Director
Project CREST

Project CREST (which stands for Clinical Regional Support Teams) is an innovative, LEAA-funded action project, using paid and volunteer counselor education students to work as a referral agency with juvenile delinquents in several north Florida communities. The program is distinctive in that its assessment, counseling, and consulting services do not replace, but rather augment regular Division of Youth Services probation treatment, resulting in ongoing "dual treatment" for CREST clients.

This convention program will present: (a) the need for the CREST project and the challenge the field of juvenile corrections now offers the counseling profession; (b) how the CREST teams of graduate students operate; (c) how the project helps train its staff to be effective with a difficult client population; (d) how team members attempt to function as community change agents as well as personal counselors; (e) what research studies show about the project's effectiveness, together with a discussion of the problems and pitfalls encountered in such research; and (f) funding resources now available to the counseling profession for projects with a delinquent population, plus necessary steps in obtaining these funds.

The topics will be presented by CREST staff members. Use will be made of role playing, transparencies, handouts, and audience participation. A concluding question and answer session will be provided.

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PROJECT CREST: A University Responds to Juvenile Delinquency
An APGA Convention Abstract

INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT CREST

Juvenile delinquency, increasingly a social problem in America, presents a vital challenge to today's helping professions. Traditional ways of coping with delinquency, especially incarceration, have proven costly, ineffective, and out to step with the purpose of juvenile law, which guarantees treatment instead of punishment for youthful offenders. Public attention is being directed to innovative, less expensive, community-based treatment approaches, requiring more skilled professional services on the local scene than are presently available. The few specialists who are available for referral from probation workers frequently demonstrate inadequate knowledge of the court system, and many of their clients are as resistant to permissive voluntary treatment as to authoritarian control.

Aided by federal funding, the counseling profession now has an opportunity to blaze new trails in the field of juvenile corrections. Project CREST is one pioneering endeavor undertaken by counselors-in-training at the University of Florida. By means of Project CREST (Clinical Regional Support Teams), teams of volunteer graduate counseling students and undergraduate tutors, led by paid counselor education doctoral interns, operate in six communities, providing diagnostic, counseling, and consultation services for some two hundred children a year referred by the state Division of Youth Services (DYS).

The following will be discussed briefly: How referrals are handled; characteristics of the clients; the CREST dual treatment concept; and counseling methods that are used.

Carol Klopfer
Team Leader, Project CREST
Graduate Student, Counselor Education, University of Florida
PROJECT CREST: A University Responds to Juvenile Delinquency
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HOW THE TEAMS FUNCTION

A transparency showing the CREST organization will be presented.

CREST's staffing design is structured for professional growth and communication. In each community team members are accountable to their team leader, who works alongside them. Team leaders meet weekly with the Director for consultation and supervision, and together to help shape and re-shape the program. On alternate weeks the entire staff meets for dialogue and training. All of this is in addition to regular weekly counseling supervision with faculty members in the University's Counselor Education Department.

The values demonstrated by this system include: (a) insuring necessary checks and balances; (b) providing for personal closeness and the free sharing of problems; (c) the elicitation and exchange of ideas from new as well as experienced staff members; (d) input from university faculty; (e) rapid adaptation of staff to the community setting, the client population, and the juvenile justice system.

Team functioning will be illustrated by briefly role playing a team meeting, with emphasis upon a problematic situation.

Alejo Vada
Team Leader, Project CREST
Graduate Student, Counselor Education, University of Florida
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THE PROJECT'S TRAINING PROGRAM

CREST believes the agency has a responsibility to relate theories of helping taught at the university to the target population. Therefore, workshops are conducted, and bi-weekly general staff meetings are devoted to in-service training. Areas covered include the following:

1. Periodic orientation of new staff, with attention to characteristics of clients, services provided by the project, relationships of CREST to DYS and other agencies, the CREST "dual treatment" concept, project organization, and administrative requirements.

2. The Juvenile Justice System. Guest speakers are invited from probation agencies; judges, state attorneys' and public defenders' offices' and the university law school faculty.

3. Community agencies involved with the target population. Guests are invited from police and sheriffs" departments, Department of Family Services, and Community mental health centers.

4. Methods of counseling and consultation applied to the target population, with emphasis on actual project cases. Guest specialists have discussed the use of relaxation techniques; behavioral techniques with learning handicapped children; techniques with hostile, resistant, and non-verbal clients; vocational fantasy; reality therapy contracts; and techniques of Gestalt Therapy.

To illustrate, a CREST staff meeting will be simulated, where a case using Gestalt methods will be presented. Segments of a taped counseling interview will be played.

Corey Bercun
Team Leader, Project CREST
Graduate Student, Counselor Education, University of Florida
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EFFORTS AT COMMUNITY CHANGE

Delinquency is a complex social problem, requiring change in the community as well as change in the individuals accused of deviancy. Services and activities other than counseling are provided by the Project in each community. Team leaders act as consultatnts to DYS personnel with troublesome cases, helping the probation counselors learn to focus on feelings and to explore various alternatives with clients. The Project's in-service training program for DYS has included presentations on Parent Effectiveness Training; Vocational Exploration Groups; how to deal with resistant clients; the effective use of groups; and the use and understanding of tests. CREST staff members are presently engaged in helping set up programs for working with parents in groups.

With the school as a target, staff members consult with principals, teachers, and guidance counselors, aiming to change a kid's image in school through strength identification. Team leaders have initiated tutoring programs for kids with reading problems and even provided leadership in setting up alternative school curricula.

CREST people attempt to change community attitudes by interpreting the needs of youth to civic clubs, police training classes, and boards of county commissioners, and by participating in community-wide juvenile committees. In order to avoid overlap, the staff seeks active cooperation with other agencies, such as community mental health centers.

Martha Kemp
Research Associate, Project CREST
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PROJECT CREST: A University Responds to Juvenile Delinquency
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PROJECT EVALUATION

From the beginning, the formal structure of Project CREST has made provisions for an annual evaluation of effectiveness. Several kinds of data have been gathered: (a) number of times the client was charged with a delinquent act; (b) school attendance, suspensions, and grades; and (c) personality functioning as measured by the Tennessee Self Concept Scale and Jessness Behavior Checklist. These were analyzed within a design involving pre- and post measures for clients and untreated controls. The hypothesis that CREST clients changed for the better has been generally supported Details of this research are available from the Project.

A completely controlled research design is an ideal difficult to attain in a small action project such as this one, and the internal validity of our program evaluation could be attacked at several points: (a) selectivity in the assignment of subjects to treated and untreated groups; (b) subject mortality; (c) variations in the conditions of administration of the psychological tests; and (d) missing data. Solutions to these problems, and to practical problems encountered in all field research, warrant discussion. Experience in this program would lead us to recommend some sort of individual goal-oriented evaluation method (such as the ATGON system) in addition to or in place of the measures we have been using. Suggestions from the audience will be entertained.

Subjective evaluations from kids & from DYS
Opinions count

Robert Lee
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PROJECT CREST: A University Responds to Juvenile Delinquency
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FUNDING RESOURCES AND CONCLUSION

Project CREST is supported by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) through state block action grant funds. Steps in obtaining these funds will be discussed in some detail.

Two alternate sources of funds for counseling-type programs will be presented. These are: (a) LEAA discretionary grants for innovative, demonstrative projects of national scope; and (b) additional funds to be released by LEAA under the recently enacted Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974. If possible, copies of this legislation will be made available to the audience.

Suggestions will be offered as to the kinds of counseling programs likely to qualify for LEAA funding. Important differences between prevention-oriented and rehabilitation-oriented programs will be cited.

The presentation will conclude with a question and answer session with the audience.